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FULFILLMENT OF MARITAL EXPECTATIONS IN RELATION TO
COMMUNICATION STYLE AND PARENTS' MARITAL INTERACTIONS

by

Shawn Corey Edgington

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

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ABSTRACT

Fulfillment of Marital Expectations in Relation to Communication
Style and Parents' Marital Interactions

by

Shawn Corey Edgington, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1996

Major Professor: Scot M. Allgood, Ph.D.
Department: Family and Human Development

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships of communication variables and parent marital variables with the fulfillment of marital expectations among newlyweds. Little research has been done on newlywed expectations and communication. This is an exploratory study conducted to determine how newlyweds' exposure to parents' marital interactions and communication styles correlated with newlyweds' fulfillment of marital expectations. Fifty newlywed couples (married 3-6 months) filled out the Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI) questionnaire about their level of fulfillment of expectations. Couples were then videotaped talking to one another about the strengths of their marriage followed by a discussion of the potential weaknesses of their relationship. Those videotapes were then coded using the Marital Interaction Coding System--Global. The results indicate that parental marital variables had no significant association with newlywed children's level of fulfillment of expectations. The

that was correlated with fulfillment of expectations was the wife's "withdrawal" behavior during the conversation about dissimilarities and weaknesses. The lack of relation with the other variables may have been masked by high levels of satisfaction in the first year of marriage and the homogeneous sample (age and religion).

(59 pages)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to dedicate this thesis to those who have been most instrumental in its completion, my thesis chair, Scot Allgood and my parents, Jerry and Maxine Edgington. Scot helped me significantly from the beginning. He worked with me in developing the initial ideas, data collection, methods of assessment, analyses, and countless revisions. While my parent's involvement was not as direct, it was no less significant. They were always inquisitive about my progress and supportive through the entire process. Much of the credit for this work should be given to these three people.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

This introduction chapter first addresses the goals and rationale for this research, followed by an overview of the social exchange conceptual framework that guides this research. The primary goal of this research is to explore the relationship between couple communication and the corresponding level of fulfillment of expectations. There are two principal reasons why this research is necessary. First, there is a lack of research examining the relationship between newlywed marital expectations and communication. Research about the relationship between fulfillment of expectations and communication is important to study because of their theoretical importance to marriage (Schroeder, Blood, & Maluso, 1992). In studying that relationship, useful information about how the two components work together may be discovered. Knowledge obtained from this study may add to the base of information about the dynamics particular to newly married couples. Sabatelli (1984) hypothesized that knowledge about the level of fulfillment of expectations is correlated with the couple's level of satisfaction. Clarifying the link between expectations and communication will test the theoretical assumption and add to our understanding of the development of new marriages.

The second reason this study is necessary relates to the applicability of the results. Research in this area may have application for family therapists and family life educators by providing them with added information about primary predictors of unfulfilled expectations among newlyweds. Knowing the primary predictors of unfulfilled

expectations could help therapists and educators design and test interventions specifically for newlyweds. If therapists know something about the background of fulfilled or unfulfilled expectations, they may have a clearer notion of how to approach the couple's concerns. Newlywed couples or engaged couples may also find this information particularly valuable in that knowledge about their expectations and the way it affects their communication could be used to avoid potential pitfalls later in the marriage. Kurdek's (1991) article on marital distress suggests that a "marriage with many dysfunctional beliefs (expectations) regarding relationships is likely to get caught up in an escalating cycle of marital conflict" (p. 628). Similarly, a marriage with many previously unknown or presently unfulfilled expectations is likely to result in increased marital conflict. If this is the case, then an increased understanding of one another's beliefs and expectations regarding marriage may be crucial in preventing marital distress before it starts.

The information gained from the Sabatelli assessment (1984), the Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI), will give therapists additional information about the couple's individual expectations as well as their individual perceptions of what is happening relative to those expectations. The therapist could then determine specific areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for each person. A knowledge of problematic areas is the first step toward resolution.

Several terms are used throughout this study and the following definitions will be used:

1. expectations is defined as the behaviors and interactions people anticipate to be a part of their marriage;

2. parents' marital status is classified in two categories: (a) intact (1st marriage) and (b) divorced once, separated, divorced more than once, and widowed;

3. perceived level of parents' marital satisfaction is defined as the spouse's perception of how satisfied his/her parents' marriage was/is.

Conceptual Framework

Social exchange theory is a theory of economics that has been adapted to understand human interactions (Donovan & Jackson, 1990). According to social exchange theory, people assess the costs and benefits of their relationships and make decisions about their relationships based on those assessments. When people evaluate the cost of staying in a relationship as greater than the rewards, they will be more inclined to terminate that relationship. Social exchange theory guided the development of the Marital Comparison Level Index (assessment of expectations) and is the most useful theory for understanding the concepts of this study. Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) cited several core assumptions of social exchange theory. In order to understand why social exchange theory has the best fit for this study, those core assumptions are outlined as:

1. Social exchanges are characterized by interdependence: That is, the ability to obtain profits in a relationship is contingent on the ability to provide others with rewards.
2. The emergent experiences of relationships guide subsequent exchanges.
3. Social exchanges are regulated by norms of reciprocity.

4. Social exchanges are regulated by norms of fairness.

5. The dynamics of interaction within relationships and the stability of relationships over time results from the contrasting levels of attractions and dependence experienced by the participants in the relationship.

Further, spouses' level of fulfillment of expectations will be determined on the basis of whether they are experiencing more or less of a behavior than anticipated. Therefore, the evaluation of level of fulfillment of marital expectations will be based on their perceptions of costs and benefits from the marriage relative to their investment. According to Sabatelli and Shehan (1993), the higher the level of fulfillment of marital expectations the more likely the couple is to experience marital satisfaction. If people are experiencing less than expected on a majority of the issues, they will have an unsatisfactory marital experience. The opposite is true if people are experiencing more than they expected on a majority of marital issues.

Rusbult (1983) speaks of a satisfying marital relationship as being one in which a person has a high level of rewards and a low level of costs for being in the relationship. As stated earlier, expectations of costs and benefits are related to the way couples communicate (Schroeder et al., 1992). Perceptions of costs or benefits in relation to expectations are commonly examined in research on role expectations (Donovan & Jackson, 1990; Sabatelli, 1984, 1988). This cost/benefit way of viewing a relationship is most closely related to the core ideas of social exchange theory.

Another reason that social exchange theory is the most appropriate theory to direct this study relates to the second assumption, which stated that prior relationship

experiences influence subsequent interactions. This is important because the first marital relationship most people are exposed to is that of their parents. Children exposed to their parents' marriage, for good or bad, can be expected to have similar marital interactions themselves (Schroeder et al., 1992; Wallerstein, 1987). Thus, a key component of this research is that parents' marital status and/or quality will be closely related to the children's expectations about marriage.

Social exchange theory's basic premise of human interaction is that people behave in a cost/benefit way that will be most beneficial to them (Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993). Those behaviors are guided by economic principles. If this theoretical premise is true, then newly married couples "invest" themselves into a marriage anticipating a relationship that is more rewarding than costly. The goal of this study is to assess whether a couple's communication style and exposure to parents' marital interactions are associated with the level of fulfillment of expectations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature will cover marital expectations, communication, and family of origin factors that influence expectations. The links between these variables will be explored and the discussion will end with testable hypotheses.

Expectations from Family of Origin

Expectations are continually being formed and altered by daily experiences. If people commute to work each day by bus, they will "expect" to pay the same fare, travel the same route, and arrive at approximately the same time. After experiencing the same routine over time, they develop a clear idea of what to "expect." In short, people come to expect that which is common to their experience. This idea correlates with the assumptions of social exchange theory (Sabatelli, 1984). People will be pleased or displeased about different experiences relative to their expectations depending on how the expectations were or were not met. If bus commuters were charged a lower fare and arrived at their destination sooner, they would be pleased. Alternatively, being charged a higher fare and arriving later would cause displeasure. This simple notion about the formation of expectations provides the basis for this section of the review of literature.

Social exchange theory holds that people's expectations about their own marriage are developed dependent on their experience with and perceptions of their parents' marriages (Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993). The following two sections of the review of

literature report some of the major findings associated with that assumption. The first of those two sections addresses the issues relevant to the development of expectations about marriage. They are as follows: a) perceptions of parents' marital happiness, b) impact of divorce, and c) gender differences in the impact of those variables.

Perceptions of Parental Marital Happiness

Willetts-Bloom and Nock (1992), in a study of marital aspirations among college-age students, reported that the degree of perceived marital happiness in the parent's marriage is a significant predictor of the children's marital behaviors. They reported that students who perceived their parents' marriage as unhappy wanted to marry and start their families later in life. Conversely, "viewing one's parents' marriage as happy would increase desires for marriage and parenthood," (p. 18). Based on this study, it appears that perceptions of parents' marital interactions impact what children expect to occur in their own marriages.

A telephone survey of 1,979 married persons conducted by Booth and Edwards (1990) revealed similar results. Their data indicate that children who were continually exposed to their parents' intact and yet unhappy marriages were negatively impacted on a number of marital variables (spouse's interactions with children, marital happiness, happiness with spouse's interactions with children, and commitment to marriage). The impact, however, was minimal (explained variance less than five percent). Their research also reveals that exposure to an unhappy parental marriage has more detrimental effects than experiencing a divorce or separation.

The Greenberg and Nay (1982) study of 397 college students provides additional support for the negative impact of exposure to a conflictual parental marriage. They reported that living in a conflict-ridden, intact home may be just as detrimental as living in a home of separation/divorce in terms of future marital adjustment. Moreover, they suggested that subjects from both types of family backgrounds had similar levels of familiarity with marital conflict vignettes. Based on the literature regarding perceptions of parental marital satisfaction, the researchers have hypothesized that there will be an influence, but that the impact will be minimal.

Impact of Divorce

Wallerstein's 10-year longitudinal study (1987) of children age 6-8 years through 16-18 years examined the effects of divorce on children's attitudes toward marriage. Her study indicates that young adults from divorced families are more apprehensive about romantic relationships, reporting that they did not want to make the same mistakes their parents made. Adolescent males in particular are impacted when the father is absent from the home. Greenberg and Nay (1982) also found that children from divorced families had the highest level of approval toward divorce, which may be an indirect way of assessing expectations about their own future marriages.

In contrast, Schroeder et al., (1992), in a study of 292 female students attending an eastern university, stated that "daughters of intact families expected less role frustration than any other group..." (p. 285). Not all of the effects of parental divorce are negative, however. The same study (Schroeder et al., 1992) also provided support for the notion

that children from divorced families have different marital expectations than those from intact families. Daughters of divorced parents have more egalitarian marital roles, less traditional views of motherhood, and more positive attitudes toward day care. This is very relevant to the present study because egalitarian expectations are correlated with high communication scores (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993).

Livingston and Kordinak (1990) examined the effectiveness of role model theory as it correlates with social exchange theory in explaining the transmission of marital instability. They reported that merely examining the parent's behavior in determining the transmission of marital instability is overly simplistic. They suggested that variables such as level of religiosity, personality of the child, degree of exposure to parental conflict, and age of child at the time of marital dissolution need to be considered in order to get a better picture of how marital instability is transmitted. Overly simplifying the relationship between parents' marital status and their children's subsequent marital success may be the reason why the explained variance is so low in these types of studies (Booth & Edwards, 1990; Mueller & Pope, 1977; Pope & Mueller, 1976). For that reason, the hypothesis for the present study was that the parent marital variables of perceived level of parental marital satisfaction and parental marital status will impact only minimally the explained variance in the level of fulfillment of expectations among newlywed couples.

Communication

The purpose of this portion of the literature review is to establish the importance of the role of communication in the fulfillment of expectations. There are several types of communication that are studied in connection with marital interactions. Some types of marital communication are typically considered detrimental (e.g., confrontation, high negative affect, withdrawal), while others are thought to be helpful (e.g., high positive affect, problem-solving skills). While much is left to be done in determining the degree and type of impact various forms of communication have on marital interactions (Haefner, Notarius, & Pelligrini, 1991; Krokoff, 1991; Markman, 1991), there can be little doubt that communication does impact marital satisfaction.

There is extensive literature addressing the intricacies of marital interaction and communication (Falloon, 1991). For example, research regarding the effects of communication on marital satisfaction is particularly notable (Burleson & Denton, 1992; Gottman, 1994; Haefner et al., 1991; Krokoff, 1991; Markman, 1991). While research connecting communication and marital satisfaction exists, the empirical link between communication and the fulfillment of expectations is unclear, particularly when the sample considered is narrowed to newlyweds only. Despite the fact that the fulfillment of expectations in marriage is a broader concept than marital satisfaction, the limited research on the fulfillment of expectations made it necessary to use the literature from marital satisfaction to guide this study.

The Haefner et al. (1991) study is representative of the current study in that couples were videotaped, their level of satisfaction was assessed, and explanations of how their communication behaviors impacted marital satisfaction were discussed. The authors examined the methods of communication of 27 couples in a videotaped, problem-solving discussion. Couples' level of satisfaction with that discussion was recorded immediately afterwards. Results revealed that negative types of communication (e.g., criticizing and withdrawal) provided more strength in explaining the variability of marital distress than did positive behaviors. They also found that the level of satisfaction with the marriage significantly impacted couples' level of satisfaction with the discussion. Interestingly, they found that wives whose husbands were inhibited in their problem-solving behaviors reported less short-term satisfaction with the discussion. However, these same wives were more satisfied in the long run because the issue they were discussing was altered as a result of the discussion. They concluded that couples who make efforts to resolve issues may have increased short-term dissatisfaction because of the confrontation but long-term satisfaction because of its resolution.

Further, Haefner et al. (1991) found that problem-solving inhibitive behaviors in husbands was associated with more discussion dissatisfaction among wives who had higher levels of satisfaction with the marriage (Haefner et al., 1991). Wives with lower levels of marital satisfaction reported less discussion dissatisfaction related to their husband's problem-solving inhibitive behaviors. When husbands demonstrated problem-solving facilitative behaviors, no difference in level of discussion satisfaction was reported between women from high and low levels of marital satisfaction. Thus, wives

with higher levels of marital satisfaction were more sensitive to their husband's communication behaviors than wives with lower levels of marital satisfaction.

In his recent book, What Predicts Divorce, Gottman (1994) reported that wives tend to act as an emotional thermostat for the marriage. He hypothesized that wives typically take responsibility for stabilizing the emotional intensity of the marriage. This idea helps explain the Haefner et al. (1991) findings about satisfied wives being more sensitive to their husband's problem-solving inhibitive behaviors. If a wife does, in fact, sense her husband's inhibition or cooling off in addressing an issue, she will likely engage the husband about the issue in an attempt to negate the impact of his inhibitive behaviors, thereby keeping the emotional intensity of the relationship similar to what it had been.

Levenson and Gottman's research (1983, 1985) clarified this hypothesis in part. They coded communication between couples and found that, in a conflict, men tend to be physiologically aroused (angry) more quickly than women. If this arousal (which is very aversive to them) does not decrease, the marital satisfaction tends to be negatively affected over time. In an attempt to decrease the level of physiological arousal, men often try to avoid conflict in their relationships. As the wife senses the husband's withdrawal, she will likely attempt to engage him on the issues he is backing away from in order to maintain stability (Gottman, 1994). However, in a continued attempt to avoid the aversive arousal, the husband will continue to back off as the wife more persistently engages. If engaging the husband does not resolve the concern, this pattern of engaging and avoiding will continue to escalate, usually resulting in heightened conflict and

lashing out. The final straw of marital separation and dissolution occurs when the wife feels hopeless in her attempts to further engage the husband and refuses to continue taking responsibility for the emotional stability of the relationship (Gottman, 1994). Recognizing the futility of her efforts, she may begin to back off from the husband. When both spouses withdraw, no one takes responsibility for the relationship and separation or marital dissolution will likely result. In fact, Gottman (1994) reported 94% accuracy in predicting divorce for couples who exhibit this pattern. Therefore, withdrawal appears to be a particularly important variable to consider in assessing newlywed communication.

Similar to the Haefner et al. study (1991), Krokoff's (1991) longitudinal study revealed that some types of negative expression resulted in short-term dissatisfaction but long-term satisfaction, depending on the couples' communication style. He studied the "relationship between negative affect and marital satisfaction" (p. 51) to determine how communication orientation (e.g., conflict engaging and conflict avoiding) impacted levels of satisfaction. Couples' communication orientation was significant in that the expression of negative affect was categorized as conflict-engaging or conflict-avoiding. When conflict-avoiding wives showed disgust or contempt, the satisfaction level of the marriage increased over time.

These findings clearly document the importance of identifying communication patterns. Pollock, Die, and Marriott (1990) reported one of the few studies linking expectations and communication among married college students. These researchers asked couples to complete a battery of questionnaires and then participate in a

communication simulation task. The couples were asked to take two topics and come up with an explanation of how they were related. The researchers then monitored and subjectively evaluated the couples' communication behavior to determine their level of egalitarian-type communication. They hypothesized that couples with egalitarian expectations would have higher (more egalitarian) communication scores than those with more traditional expectations. Although none of their subjects fit into the "traditional" category, their hypothesis was supported when they contrasted "very egalitarian" and "moderately egalitarian" expectations about marriage. Couples with very egalitarian expectations did achieve higher (more egalitarian) communication scores on a marital communication inventory than the couples with moderate egalitarian expectations.

Vanzetti, Notarius, and NeeSmith (1992) have also added to the empirical link between communication and expectations. They asked spouses to evaluate their partners behavior and make attributions about why they behaved that way. Distressed couples tended to "expect more negative and fewer positive behaviors" (p. 171). This finding contradicted that of nondistressed couples who chose positive attributions for their partners' behavior. They use the term "sentiment override" to suggest spouses' expectations of their partner's behavior tends to override their perceptions of what is actually happening, which can impact the way they communicate in the marriage.

It is interesting to note the common themes from the previously cited research of Haefner et al. (1991), Gottman (1994), and Krokoff (1991), all major contributors to research in the area of communication and marital satisfaction. First, significant findings from all three studies were primarily related to negative communication behaviors as

being associated with marital distress. For example, they examined withdrawal or stonewalling and expression of negative affect through disgust, contempt, or anger. Further, in keeping with Gottman's hypothesis (1994), the wife tends to control the emotional stability of the relationship. Perhaps that is why wives are spoken of more than husbands in the research. Finally, it appears that limited expression of negative affect can facilitate marital satisfaction if it is not a continual process and if the other spouse is able to work toward resolving the issue. The Pollock et al. (1990) and Vanzetti et al. (1992) studies emphasize the importance of not only studying communication, but expectations as well. Thus, this study's hypotheses are directed at negative conversation's communication style to be more closely associated with the level of fulfillment of expectations among newlyweds. These variables also have theoretical and empirical evidence of being affected by their parents' marital interaction.

Hypotheses

The variables discussed in the review of literature were examined to determine whether or not they are associated with the fulfillment of expectations. Based on a review of current research, the following hypotheses were derived:

1. Parents' marital status, perceived level of parents' marital satisfaction, and communication from the negative conversation will be associated with the level of fulfillment of newlyweds' marital expectations.
2. There will be no association with either parents' marital relationship or expectations and the couple communication variables from the positive conversation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology section addresses design, sampling, measurement, and procedural issues pertinent to this study. The information in this section enables the reader to replicate the study.

Design

This study examines the relationship between the independent variables of communication, parents' marital status, perceived levels of parents' marital satisfaction, and the dependent variable of expectations. Therefore, the design of this study is correlational (Miller, 1986).

Sampling Techniques

The first sampling technique required use of the Cache County marriage records. Those records were reviewed and couples married 3-6 months were selected. That time frame was used to allow couples in the new relationship time to establish a somewhat normal routine but still be free of significant life changes (e.g., graduation, pregnancy, children) which may skew expectations.

The Cache County government would not release the phone numbers of couples who obtained their marriage licenses through them. However, a list of 350+ couples that were potential subjects, due to the length of time they had been married, was obtained

from the county government. Attempts to obtain the phone numbers of all 350+ potential subjects from the phone book had minimal success. Because the couples had been married such a brief time, very few of the phone numbers were listed in the phone book. Only 18 couples whose phone numbers were obtained this way agreed to participate.

Researchers then took the husbands' names from the list obtained through the Cache County marriage records and looked them up in the student directory at Utah State University. This and a snowball sampling technique were employed to obtain the remainder of the sample. Snowball sampling was used by asking respondent couples to give the names and phone numbers of any recently married friends they had that may be interested in participating. During the initial phone call, couples were informed that for their participation, they would have the choice of receiving movie tickets or coupons for a video rental.

Using all of the above techniques, a sample of 50 couples was generated, which was large enough to do the necessary hypothesis testing (Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987). The mean age for the husbands was 23.29 and for wives it was 21.70. The vast majority of the couples were Mormon (96%) and attending church services weekly (90%). All of the wives were Caucasian as were all but two of the husbands (1 - Hispanic; 1 - Asian). Subjects' education level was not specifically asked for in the demographics questionnaire. However, one or both spouses of 47 of the couples were students at USU. Table 1 details several important characteristics of the subjects.

Table 1

Summary of Sample Characteristics

Subject Variables	Husbands	Wives
Age		
M	23.29	21.70
SD	2.70	3.22
Perceived Level of Parents' Marital Satisfaction		
M	8.17	8.39
SD	1.87	1.89
Parents' Marital Status		
Intact	88%	82%
Religion		
Mormon	96%	96%
Religious Attendance		
Weekly	84%	84%
Monthly	12%	14%

Measures

In a review of the communication measures from L'Abate and Bagarozzi (1993) and Touliatos, Perlmutter, and Straus (1990), no self-report measures of marital communication with adequate levels of reliability and validity were reported. Thus, videotape coding was used instead, which is the state of the art in assessing marital

communication (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993). The Marital Interaction Coding System (MICS) (Weiss & Summers, 1983) is one of the most commonly used coding systems (Weiss & Tolman, 1990). The MICS is the parent of the Marital Interaction Coding System-Global (MICS-G), which is more easily learned and therefore a less expensive coding system that assesses marital communication as well or better than the MICS (Weiss & Tolman, 1990).

The Marital Interaction Coding System-Global (MICS-G) (Weiss & Tolman, 1990) was used to train coders to reliably code couples' communication. The six global types of communication assessed with this measure are conflict, problem solving, validation, invalidation, facilitation, and withdrawal. Appendix A contains the sub-categories that define the variables. Five upper-division undergraduate students majoring in Family Human Development at USU were recruited to work as coders for this project. These coders all had career aspirations to do marital research/therapy. Three of the five coders were female.

Coders were trained by this author and his advisor, according to Weiss and Tolman's (1990) instruction booklet. Training was done with a series of videotapes held at the Family Life Center and continued approximately one quarter until the agree/disagree ratio was greater than .80. Table 2 reports the Kappa reliability levels for the coders following the coding of the actual research tapes. Kappa is a more stringent indicator of interrater reliability (Bakeman & Gottman, 1979) than simple interrater reliability ratio.

Coders were trained to monitor subjects' conversation content and affect.

Relative to affect, coders were specifically trained to notice eye movement, tone of voice, and body cues in each of the six communication areas of the MICS-G. Each category of communication had an overall score ranging from zero to five. For example, a score of zero meant that the spouse did not demonstrate any of the behaviors from that category. A score of three indicated that the spouse's behaviors from that category occurred often (50% of the interactive time) or with some intensity. A score of five from a category meant that the spouse's behavior was evident most of the interaction time (90%) and very intense.

Table 2

Kappa Reliabilities of Marital Interaction Coding System--Global for Coder's Scoring of Couple Communication

Communication Variables	Husbands	Wives
Conflict	.71	.77
Problem Solving	.69	.63
Validation	.87	.75
Invalidation	.82	.83
Facilitation	.81	.74
Withdrawal	.78	1.00

As the coders watched the tape, the frequency of communication occurring in the subareas was monitored for each of the six categories. Based on the number of marks in the subareas for each communication category, coders would derive an overall score for each category. The group was trained for approximately 3 months until all of the coders had an overall interrater reliability at the desired level or higher. Weekly reliability checks were made throughout the study and interitem agreement ranged between .85-.90. Given that none of the coders' scores dropped below the specified .80 level (Weiss & Tolman, 1990), retraining video coders was not necessary.

The Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI) (Sabatelli, 1984) was used to assess the couple's expectations toward marriage in comparison to what they felt was actually occurring in their marriage. The MCLI is a 32-item questionnaire addressing the various marital issues potentially important in fulfilling marital expectations. Reliability for the scale was assessed with Cronbach's alpha (.93) (Norusis, 1991). The MCLI had construct validity with equity measures ($r = .62$) and with commitment measures ($r = .58$) (Sabatelli, 1984). (See Appendix B for the MCLI questionnaire.)

Each MCLI item is rated on a seven-point Likert type scale with the middle score (four) representing fulfillment of their expectations. Scores lower than four signify unmet expectations while higher scores indicate that expectations were exceeded. The MCLI assesses the fulfillment of personal expectations regardless of how those expectations may compare with the expectations of others. The range of answers on this scale is from 32 to 224 with 128 being the midpoint when summing the total point values. The assumption of this measure is that a cumulative score of 128 or more represents a

marriage that, in general, is more satisfying than anticipated (Sabatelli, 1984). A score of 127 or lower represents a marriage that is less satisfying than anticipated. If expectations are being met or exceeded (128+), couples were categorized as "satisfied." Although the MCLI was designed to be dichotomized, no follow-up studies that employed the MCLI actually used it that way. In this study, the range of scores was 117 to 170 for husbands ($M = 147.12$) and 121 to 194 for wives ($M = 153.06$).

In order to insure that the MCLI questionnaire was a reliable measure of the level of fulfillment of expectations, preliminary analyses were conducted to obtain alpha scores. The Cronbach's alpha levels for the MCLI for men and women were .78 and .85, respectively. According to DeVellis (1991), these alpha levels are well within the acceptable range for a measure of this type. DeVellis (1991) has reported that alpha scores between .70-.80 are respectable and that alpha scores between .80-.90 are very good. In the original article about the MCLI, Sabatelli (1984) reported alpha levels of .93 for both men and women. While the alpha levels for this study were not as high as Sabatelli's, they were high enough that the information obtained was acceptable.

Procedure

Couples obtained through the sampling procedures were contacted by phone and informed about the nature of the study. They were notified that they had been selected to participate in a study that would take approximately 45 minutes of their time. They were informed that by agreeing to participate, their communication would be videotaped for approximately 10-20 minutes as part of the research. They were notified that the tapes

would remain strictly confidential, would not leave the Family Life Center, and that their names would be kept confidential from video coders. The coders received strict instructions regarding how to handle confidentiality concerns and were not allowed to code tapes of people they knew. In only one instance did a coder recognize the videotaped couple and so she simply coded a different tape. The primary researchers followed the same procedures for confidentiality for any subjects they knew. In addition, subjects had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The drop-out rate was minimized by calling couples prior to their appointment to remind them of the time and place. Only three of those who said they would come failed to do so.

Participating couples came to the Family Life Center (493 N. 700 E., Logan, UT) where they read and signed the informed consent form, which reiterated their rights as subjects and the researchers obligations of confidentiality. They then filled out a demographics sheet, including questions on parents' marital status and perceived level of parents' marital satisfaction, the MCLI questionnaire, and finally participated in the videotaping. Prior to videotaping, couples were randomly assigned to the "positive" or "negative" topic of conversation. Subjects assigned to the "positive" conversation first were given a slip of paper suggesting they discuss similarities, strengths, and what they had learned from one another. They were then given a slip of paper for the "negative" conversation suggesting they discuss dissimilarities and what they would like to alter about their spouses. The conversation order was counterbalanced to limit the possibility of the first conversation skewing the second.

The videotapes to be coded were kept in the front office of the Family Life Center and were made available only to the trained coders. The secretary had a list of those coders and checked the videos out to them so that the tapes could be taken to an observation room and coded. The office is locked when the secretary is not there. After the tapes were coded, they were kept in a locked storage room in the basement of the Family Life Center. The measures and research proposal were reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board at Utah State University.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In order to test the two hypotheses, several preliminary analyses were necessary. In order to test the first hypothesis, correlation coefficients were calculated. Correlations were conducted to determine the association between communication and the level of fulfillment of expectations. Another preliminary analysis was necessary to determine whether husbands and wives communicated differently in the positive versus the negative conversation. If they did, separate analyses would have been necessary.

This section lists the means and standard deviations for the MICS-G scores (see Table 3) followed by the results of the paired t test for husbands' and wives' conversation scores. The correlation coefficients of level of fulfillment of expectations with communication scores and parents' marital status are then addressed. Finally, the regression of parents' marital status and those variables correlated closely enough to fulfillment of expectations is discussed.

Analyses were conducted on the positive and negative conversations for both husbands and wives. Paired t tests were used to compare the communication scores from the two different conversations to determine if couples communicated differently on each of the six codes when discussing content about positive and negative aspects of their relationship. These analyses were conducted to determine if the conversations needed to be analyzed separately. Results of the paired t tests for the husbands and wives communication scores are found in Table 4. These paired t tests reveal that both

husbands and wives communicate significantly differently in positive and negative conversations on all variables except husbands' withdrawal.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Husbands' and Wives' MICS--G Communication

Scores from the Positive and Negative Conversation

<u>Communication Variables</u>	<u>Husbands</u>		<u>Wives</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Conflict				
Positive Conversation	.29	.62	.44	1.40
Negative Conversation	1.10	1.13	1.10	1.02
Problem Solving				
Positive Conversation	.65	.70	.71	.71
Negative Conversation	1.52	1.07	1.73	1.03
Validation				
Positive Conversation	3.29	.87	3.38	.84
Negative Conversation	2.31	.99	2.44	.99
Invalidation				
Positive Conversation	.29	.71	.27	.61
Negative Conversation	.69	1.01	.67	1.02
Facilitation				
Positive Conversation	3.15	1.24	3.17	1.23
Negative Conversation	2.50	1.19	2.65	1.14
Withdrawal				
Positive Conversation	.17	.43	.04	.20
Negative Conversation	.25	.53	.25	.53

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and t Values for Husbands' Positive and Negative Conversation Scores

<u>Communication Variables</u>	<u>Positive Conversation</u>		<u>Negative Conversation</u>		<u>t</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Conflict	.29	.62	1.10	1.13	5.39**
Problem Solving	.65	.70	1.52	1.07	5.15**
Validation	3.29	.87	2.31	.99	-6.16**
Invalidation	.29	.71	.69	1.01	2.73**
Facilitation	3.15	1.29	2.50	1.19	-4.48**
Withdrawal	.17	.43	.25	.53	1.00

** $p < .01$

The results of the paired t tests on the wives' communication scores for the two conversations are reported in Table 5. Results of the paired t tests reveal that wives communicate in significantly different ways during positive and negative conversations on all variables. Due to the differences listed in Tables 4 and 5, separate analyses were conducted on the communication scores for the positive and negative conversations. Given the interval level data of the dependent variable (MICS-G) and the independent variable (MCLI), multiple regression was deemed the most appropriate analysis. Correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if there was a linear relationship

between the independent variables and the dependent variable to meet the assumptions of multiple regression (Norusis, 1991). Regressions were then conducted only on those variables with significant ($p < .05$) correlations (Norusis, 1991).

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and t Values for Wives' Positive and Negative Conversation Scores

<u>Communication Variables</u>	<u>Positive Conversation</u>		<u>Negative Conversation</u>		<u>t</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Conflict	.27	.61	1.10	1.02	5.67**
Problem Solving	.71	.71	1.73	1.03	7.07**
Validation	3.38	.84	2.44	.99	-7.15**
Invalidation	.27	.61	.67	1.02	2.67**
Facilitation	3.17	1.23	2.65	1.14	-3.65**
Withdrawal	.04	.20	.25	.53	2.65*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Husbands' and wives' total expectation scores were correlated with the six coding scores from both the positive and negative conversations as well as parent's marital status and perceived level of parental marital satisfaction. Correlations between parents' marital status and perceived level of parental marital satisfaction could not be conducted because they are mutually exclusive of one another, in that parents who were not married could

not be given a marital satisfaction score (see Tables 6 and 7). Husbands' scores are reported in Table 6, and as noted, there were no significant correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables.

Correlation coefficients for the wives' level of fulfillment of expectations with the communication scores for the positive and negative conversation as well as parent's marital status are reported in Table 7. The only statistically significant correlation coefficients were "withdrawal" on the negative conversation and parents' marital status with facilitation on the positive conversation. None of the other correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables were significant. Based on the results of these analyses, another data check was performed. The independent variables were plotted with the dependent variable to check for curvilinear trends. No trends were noted on any of the independent variables for husbands or wives.

The primary analysis of this study was a stepwise regression conducted on the dependent variables with significant correlations with the fulfillment of expectations variable. As noted in Table 7, wives' "withdrawal" score on the negative conversation was correlated with expectations, ($r = .34$). With only one independent variable, squaring the correlation would reveal the same information as a regression. The effect size or explained variance is (.116), which means that wives' withdrawal accounts for 11.6% of the variance in expectations.

While the level of perceived marital satisfaction was hypothesized to be related to expectations, the contribution was expected to be minimal. The results, while contrary to the hypothesis, are not that surprising.

Table 6

Correlations of Husbands' Communication Scores with Positive and Negative Conversations, Parents' Marital Status, Perceived Level of Parental Marital Satisfaction, and the MCLI

Communication Variables	<u>Positive Communication</u>								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Conflict	---	.24	-.36**	.72**	-.17	.37**	.08	-.15	-.01
2 Problem Solving		---	.03	.08	-.01	.27	-.12	-.04	-.04
3 Validation			---	-.11	.41**	-.02	.02	.14	.26
4 Invalidation				---	-.07	.32	.12	-.08	.17
5 Facilitation					---	.04	.16	.19	.09
6 Withdrawal						---	.16	.19	.09
7 MCLI							---	.06	.22
8 PMS								---	---
9 HPLPMS									---

Communication Variables	<u>Negative Conversation</u>								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Conflict	---	.48**	-.23	.73**	-.36**	.34**	-.06	-.25	.04
2 Problem Solving		---	-.02	.19	-.25	.21	-.09	-.12	-.06
3 Validation			---	-.27	.31	-.03	-.14	.22	-.30
4 Invalidation				---	-.24	.22	.10	-.21	-.05
5 Facilitation					---	.12	.14	.22	.02
6 Withdrawal						---	.00	-.15	-.07
7 MCLI							---	.06	.22
8 PMS								---	---
9 HPLPMS									---

** $p < .01$

Table 7

Correlations of Wives' Communication Scores with Positive and Negative
Conversations, Parental Marital Status, Perceived Level of Parental Marital
Satisfaction, and the MCLI

Communication Variables	<u>Positive Communication</u>								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Conflict	---	.48**	-.29	.54**	-.18	.42**	.00	-.11	-.09
2 Problem Solving		---	.19	.48**	-.09	.24	-.09	.18	-.05
3 Validation			---	-.08	.16	-.22	.02	.13	-.16
4 Invalidation				---	-.12	.42**	.09	-.11	.07
5 Facilitation					---	-.04	-.12	.35**	-.01
6 Withdrawal						---	.13	-.09	.21
7 MCLI							---	.04	-.06
8 PMS								---	---
9 HPLPMS									---

Communication Variables	<u>Negative Conversion</u>								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Conflict	---	.21	-.36**	.61**	-.32	.31	.06	-.05	.02
2 Problem Solving		---	.07	-.05	-.12	.09	-.04	.12	.12
3 Validation			---	-.36**	.39**	-.07	-.13	.03	.00
4 Invalidation				---	-.29	.40**	.09	-.19	.29
5 Facilitation					---	-.20	-.12	.24	.15
6 Withdrawal						---	.34**	.00	.07
7 MCLI							---	.04	-.06
8 PMS								---	---
9 HPLPMS									---

** $p < .01$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between parental marital status, perceived level of parental marital satisfaction, marital communication, and newlyweds' level of fulfillment of expectations. The first hypothesis, that negative communication, parents' marital status, and perceived level of parental marital satisfaction would be associated with fulfillment of expectations, was supported only in part. As noted in Table 7, only wives' withdrawal behavior in the negative conversation was significantly correlated with expectations. While this was expected, given the number of correlations conducted, there is a possibility that it was significant just by chance. While this is a possibility, the relationship was in the expected direction. Wives' withdrawal behavior in the negative conversation explained approximately 11.5% of the variance in the level of fulfillment of expectations.

The significant finding about withdrawal corresponds with Gottman's (1994) research about withdrawal being a vital communication variable to study, particularly among women. He speculated that wives tend to take responsibility for the level of emotional intensity in the relationship. They tend to be particularly sensitive when the relationship is satisfying. According to the results of the MCLI, 96% of the couples in this sample felt their expectations about marriage were being met or exceeded, and in keeping with Sabatelli's (1984) assumption, this meant they were satisfied. Therefore, if wives tend to take more responsibility for the emotional intensity of a satisfying

relationship, they will likely do what is necessary to maintain stability. It may be that the wives in this sample had higher withdrawal scores when discussing potentially conflictual ideas because they do not want to upset the balance of a happy relationship. If wives' withdrawal scores had been higher in the negative conversation, they may have increased the potential risk of having a conflictual interaction that could have threatened the stability of an otherwise positive relationship.

None of the other communication variables for men or women from either type of conversation were correlated strongly enough to justify using them in the regression model. There are several viable reasons for the lack of linear relationships that will be covered later.

The second hypothesis, that there would be no association between parents' marital relationship or expectations and the couples' communication scores from the positive conversation, was supported. There were no significant correlations between the communication scores from the positive conversation and parents' marital relationship and couples' expectations.

Possibly the newlywed couple's level of satisfaction was so high that any impact from a parental divorce or conflictual marriage was masked. Another possible explanation for the lack of correlation may relate to Livingston and Kordinak's (1990) report that the role model way of viewing transmission of marital quality is not complex enough to account for the intricacies involved in the transmission of marital patterns. Role model theory suggests that people develop expectations of social roles from their

family of origin (Pope & Mueller, 1976). Livingston and Kordinak (1990) have reported that theory of transmission of marital instability is overly simplistic.

Reasons that other variables from the negative conversation did not add to the predictability of level of fulfillment may be because of issues of social desirability (Salminen, 1988) or the Hawthorne effect (Diaper, 1990). Social desirability in research typically occurs when subjects respond in a way that they feel will help them best perform according to their understanding of the purpose of the research. However, Salminen (1988) reported that subjects' responses about their interpersonal relationships were negatively biased because of their knowledge of being observed. Diaper (1990) reported that the Hawthorne effect was first tested in an industrial setting where employees' level of production was measured when they were being monitored and when they were not being monitored. Employees performed better while being monitored. Regardless of the direction of influence, knowledge of being observed appears to influence subjects' behavior.

In keeping with ethical standards, subjects in this study were told that the general qualities of their relationship would be assessed and they may have wanted to "perform" well on the pencil-and-paper assessments as well as the video segment because of their knowledge of being assessed. Several individuals were curious about how their spouse had responded to the questionnaires, wanting to know how they felt. Given the premium placed on marriage in the Mormon culture (Ludlow, 1992), a newly married couple would want to feel their marriage was perceived as successful by the spouse and the people assessing their marriage. It would follow that they would be likely to respond in

a way that would present their marriage most positively, which, of course, would have skewed their responses. Evidence for this can be found by reviewing the mean scores and standard deviations. The expectations were uniformly high and negative types of communication were exhibited one or fewer times for both the positive and negative conversations (see Table 3).

Another reason the findings from the communication were limited is similar to the rationale for the parent marital variables. Subjects at this stage of life are so highly satisfied (Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983) that many potential concerns for longer duration marriages have not developed into problems. Anderson et al. (1983) reported that newly married couples are typically satisfied and have low levels of conflict.

The fact that communication scores for both husbands and wives were so different from one conversation to another indicates that couples communicate quite differently when talking about strengths and similarities of their relationship as opposed to weaknesses and dissimilarities. Communication scores for conflict, problem solving, invalidation, and withdrawal were higher for husbands and wives in the negative conversation. With the exception of the problem-solving variable, all of these variables are typically considered negative communication behaviors in marriage (Christensen & Shenk, 1991; Noller, Feeney, Bonnell, & Callan, 1994). Similarly, validation and facilitation are typically considered positive communication behaviors in marriage and they were both higher for couples in the positive conversation (Noller et al., 1994). The difference in communication tendencies may be useful for therapists if they want to alter the way a couple communicates. This research clearly shows that couples communicate

differently when the topic is "positive." Therapists may want to have couples focus some of their session time on topics they find pleasing rather than just focusing on their concerns.

As noted previously, there is an important distinction between Gottman's (1994) work and this study. Gottman examined marital satisfaction rather than the fulfillment of expectations. Despite the difference between these two concepts, there is a theoretical link made in Sabatelli's (1984) assumption about the MCLI. Couples whose expectations have been met will be satisfied. This work is important as expectations tap into not only satisfaction, but also the cognitive aspects of the cost/benefit ratio in the relationship.

Had the sample been evenly divided between couples whose expectations had been met and those whose expectations had not been met, it would have been interesting to compare withdrawal level between the two groups. If Gottman's (1994) "thermometer" hypothesis is true, it would be reasonable to expect the wives in dissatisfied marriages to engage husbands more as husbands withdraw for an unsatisfactory, physiologically arousing relationship.

Implications for Therapy

The important findings of this study are that couples communicate differently when discussing strengths and weaknesses of their relationship and that women in satisfied relationships tend to withdraw more during "negative" conversations. If couples communicate differently depending on the topic of conversation, therapy may be benefitted by helping couples focus on the strengths of their relationship and their

resources to overcome concerns (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989). Couples coming to therapy often do so because they feel unable to get out of the rut of their problematic interactions and unable to see possible solutions. A basic tenet of the solution-focused therapy literature (Berg & Miller, 1992; Cade & O'Hanlon, 1993) is to have people do less of the same in attempting to resolve their concerns. If couples' current efforts at resolution have not worked, continuing similar attempts would likely prove fruitless. Therapy can help couples get out of their rut when they are forced to consider and discuss the strengths of their relationship. It is unusual for couples to use derogatory types of communication when discussing what it was that made them fall in love. Besides communicating differently, discussing strengths of their marriage can restore hope and a more positive outlook to their relationship. Both of those steps can provide a tremendous "jump start" to what takes place in the remainder of therapy (Hiebert, Gillespie, & Stahmann, 1993).

The finding of increased withdrawal among satisfied wives in the negative conversation closely corresponds with Gottman's (1994) work about couples' interaction styles. This may be applicable to therapists as they observe the way couples interact with one another in therapy sessions. Awareness of certain behaviors and an understanding of what those behaviors mean will help therapists develop interventions that allow couples more effective means of reaching their goals.

Alexander and Parsons' (1982) functional family therapy suggests that the behaviors in a relationship serve a function in that relationship. In order for therapists to understand the meaning of certain behaviors for a couple, they need to determine what

function that behavior serves for the relationship. If that is not done, therapists may try to help the couple alter behaviors that are a strength in the relationship (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989). For example, a therapist may observe that the wife's withdrawal behavior serves the purpose of avoiding potential conflict and therefore is a beneficial behavior for the couple. Attempts at decreasing the wife's withdrawal may lead to more problems, not fewer. Therefore, in keeping with the solution-focused literature (Berg & Miller, 1992; Cade & O'Hanlon, 1993), couples create their own reality of what does and does not work for their relationship. This knowledge adds credibility to that body of research. Assumptions about what particular behaviors mean for a couple will likely prove detrimental to the therapy process.

Limitations

A principal weakness of this study is the homogeneity of the sample. Over 95% of the sample was actively involved in the Mormon faith, which strongly emphasizes the importance of marriage and families. It may be that couples from a predominantly Mormon background feel a social obligation to present themselves as being more satisfied in their relationships than they actually are to avoid disapproval of their culture. Alternatively, it may be that Mormon couples are, in fact, more satisfied in their relationships than couples of other religions and therefore are a nonrepresentative sample. Either way, the homogeneity of the sample makes generalizability of these results to non-Mormon couples impossible.

A second weakness of this study is related to the first. A vast majority of the couples reported having their expectations met. Perhaps couples would not have reported such high levels of fulfillment of their expectations if they had been married longer (i.e., 12-15 months as opposed to 3-6 months) and the newness of the relationship had worn off. However, the "time married" issue was carefully considered prior to obtaining the sample and was kept at 3-6 months to avoid potentially confounding variables (e.g., pregnancy and children).

Another potential limitation may be the MICS-G and the communication assessment itself. For example, couples were not accustomed to the setting they were asked to talk in and, as a result, may have spoken differently to one another. Also, the length of time they communicated may have been insufficient to get a feel for how they communicate on a regular basis. Or finally, the MICS-G may simply be insensitive to the communication scores measured.

Recommendations

Future research in this area would be benefitted by obtaining a larger, nationwide sample so the results could be generalized. As it is, nothing can be generalized to the population as a whole.

The fact that little research has been done on newlyweds makes this an intriguing area for study. However, from the results of this study, it appears that couples married 3-6 months were still in the "honeymoon" phase of their relationship (Erber and Gilmour, 1994). Forty-eight of the 50 couples fell into the "expectations met or exceeded"

category. While the "honeymoon" phase of a young marriage cannot be discounted as unimportant to study, predicting later marital satisfaction may be more accurate following the "honeymoon" stage. Therefore, doing this same research on couples later in life may be more helpful in determining predictability of the level of fulfillment of expectations. A large, cross-sectional sampling of different-aged subjects may also help determine the degree of impact the "honeymoon" stage plays in skewing the predictability of future marital satisfaction.

Another area of consideration for future research may be the weighting of the variables from the MCLI. Research that required couples to mark their level of fulfillment of expectations for a particular item and then mark how important that item was to them (i.e., 1-10) may help clarify the actual level of fulfillment of expectations. People may appear to have their overall expectations unmet because a number of their insignificant expectations were not met. However, people in that situation may be quite fulfilled if several of the expectations about issues vital to their marriage were met or exceeded.

Future research using videotaping may be benefitted by having couples participate in a brief trial video to get them acclimated to talking on video. The audio-video technicians reported that couples communicated more calmly on the second video clip than the first, regardless of its positive or negative nature. A "warm-up" clip about a nonrelevant subject may have helped in relaxing subjects prior to discussing the issues crucial to the research.

In summary, this study revealed that both husbands and wives communicated differently in positive conversations versus negative. Also, a small negative relationship was realized between wives' withdrawal and level of fulfillment of expectations. The researcher's interpretation of these results corresponds with other research of this kind (e.g., Gottman, 1994) in that maritally satisfied wives tend to take responsibility for the emotional intensity of the relationship and thus withdraw in the face of possible conflict. The hypothesized results, however, were less significant than the actual results. Possible reasons for this discrepancy may have been that the sample of couples in this study had such high levels of marital satisfaction that correlations between the variables of communication style and parents' marital interaction on level of fulfillment of expectations were masked. Replication studies would do well to examine whether couples' communication patterns were more highly correlated with level of fulfillment of expectations later into the marriage, when the probable masking effect of the "honeymoon" stage of marriage would be minimized.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Marital Interaction Coding System-Global (MICS-G)

		Scoring Sheet		Category Rating	
		Cue	Impression	Husband	Wife
Conflict					
1. complain	----	----	----	----	
2. criticize	----	----			
3. negative mind-reading	----	----			
4. Put downs/ insults	----	----			
5. negative commands	----	----			
6. hostility	----	----			
7. sarcasm	----	----			
8. angry/bitter voice	----	----			
Problem Solving					
1. problem description	----	----	----	----	
2. proposing solution	----	----			
3. compromise	----	----			
4. reasonableness	----	----			
Validation					
1. agreement	----	----	----	----	
2. approval	----	----			
3. accept responsibility	----	----			
4. assent	----	----			
5. receptivity	----	----			
6. encouragement	----	----			
Invalidation					
1. disagreement	----	----	----	----	
2. denial of responsibility	----	----			
3. changing of subject	----	----			
4. consistent interruption	----	----			
5. turn-off behaviors	----	----			
6. domineering behaviors	----	----			
Facilitation					
1. positive mind reading	----	----	----	----	
2. paraphrasing	----	----			
3. humor	----	----			
4. positive physical contact	----	----			
5. smile/laugh	----	----			
6. open posture	----	----			

Withdrawal

1. negation	----	----	----	----
2. no response	----	----		
3. turns away	----	----		
4. increased distance	----	----		
5. erects barriers	----	----		
6. noncontributive	----	----		

Note: Weiss, R. L. & Tolman, A. O. (1990). The marital interaction coding system-global (MICS-G): A global companion to the MICS. Behavioral Assessment, 12, 271-294.

Appendix B

Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI)

1. The amount of love you experience
2. The amount of compatibility that you experience
3. The amount of mutual respect you experience
4. The degree to which your needs are met
5. The amount of affection your partner displays
6. The amount of commitment you experience from you spouse
7. The amount your partner is willing to listen to you
8. The degree to which you interpersonal communications are effective
9. The amount of companionship you experience
10. The amount of relationship equality you experience
11. The amount of confiding that occurs between you and your spouse
12. The amount your partner is trusting of you
13. The fairness with which money is spent
14. The amount of time you spend together
15. The degree of physical attractiveness of your partner
16. The amount of conflict over daily decisions that exist
17. The amount of interest in sex your partner expresses
18. The amount of arguing over petty issues that you experience
19. The amount of sexual activity that you experience
20. The amount of conflict over the use of leisure time that you experience
21. The amount of criticism your partner expresses
22. The amount that you and your partner discuss sex
23. The amount to which you and your spouse agree on your lifestyle
24. The amount of disagreement over friends you experience
25. The amount of freedom you experience in pursuing other friendships
26. The amount to which your spouse supports your choice of an occupation
27. The amount that responsibility for household tasks is shared
28. The amount of conflict over money you experience
29. The amount of jealousy your partner expresses
30. The amount of privacy you experience
31. The degree to which you and your spouse agree on the number of children to have
32. The amount of responsibility your partner accepts for household tasks

Note: Sabatelli, R. M. (1984). The marital comparison level index. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46(3), 651-662

Appendix C

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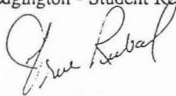
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DATE: October 7, 1994

TITLE: Fulfillment of Marital Expectations in Relation to
Communication Style

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Scot M. Allgood, PI
Shawn C. Edgington - Student Researcher

FROM: True Rubal 

Our institutional committee reviewed and approved this proposal on Sept. 9, 1994 contingent upon some corrections. These corrections have been received and you may consider this your official approval letter. This approval covers the original protocol and the revised consent form received on Oct. 6, 1994.

A study status report (continuing review) will be due in one year.

Please keep the committee advised of any changes, adverse reactions or termination of the study.